

A C C O U N T  
OF THE  
D E A T H  
OF  
E. — C. —  
IN THE  
L O C K H O S P I T A L,  
WITH SOME  
O B S E R V A T I O N S  
UPON A  
DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

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D U B L I N :

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M.DCC.XCIV.



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A C C O U N T

OF THE

D E A T H, &c.

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ON Sunday Evening, April 27th, 1794, I was sent for to attend E. C. in the *LOCK HOSPITAL*, at her own earnest desire. She had been received into the Hospital a few days before; and I understood from the nurse that she apprehended her life was in danger. From subsequent enquiries I am led to believe that her constitution was broken by a very long continuance in vice. Her age was between thirty and forty. I do not recollect the particulars of my first interview, except

that she appeared so much impressed and brought under such convictions of her guilt and danger, that I left her with the best hopes; which (I trust) have since been more than realized.

Being engaged in attending other wards in the Hospital and much occupied by a variety of business, and imagining that if the symptoms continued so alarming I should be sent for to this woman again; I omitted to repeat my visit, till Wednesday May 21st, when I was summoned to attend her, and informed that she had been calling for me earnestly. But when I came about six o'clock I found her speechless, her extremities cold, her whole frame—especially her mouth and throat—putrid. I apprehended at first that she was insensible; but upon speaking to her soon found the reverse:

and





and blessed be God she has throughout evidenced a collectedness of mind and quickness of intelligence far beyond what I could have expected. I was enabled to preach to her the glad tidings of *salvation for the chief of sinners through the blood and righteousness and power of a merciful and mighty Saviour*: and her soul appeared to hang upon the words, and to drink in the joyful sound with avidity.

I asked her several questions, to which she answered by signs more expressive than any language. But when I asked her whether she was *unwilling* to die,—and again whether she was *desirous* to die?—she declined making any sign in reply to either enquiry. It appeared that she had such a hope in the Saviour as would not allow her to be averse to death; yet without that *strength* of confidence or *clearness* of  
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of view that would embolden her to meet it with joy. In prayer she was evidently much engaged: and soon after prayer was over I was about to go; but I perceived (as well as the rest of the women) the most visible uneasiness at my leaving her. I therefore resolved to stay a little longer. I observed her hand frequently turned towards mine, and held out to me as if willing to touch me, though afraid. I soon could not mistake the motion; and though the loathsomeness of the smell and of her general appearance made my proud heart at first somewhat reluctant, I allowed her to take my hand; believing that she was a *poor fellow sinner flying for refuge* to our common SAVIOUR. She grasped it with eagerness:—hers was cold and moist. I encouraged and exhorted her to look to Jesus, to *hold him* fast, and cast herself upon him for salvation.

tion. Every word seemed to reach her heart. She exerted herself to sit up, and struggled much to speak; which the nurse and the other women observed. The nurse moved her ear to her, but she could not articulate. They said she wanted to speak about her burial: but she waved her head and shook her hands with the most evident indications of dissent. Some of the women still insisted that it was what engaged her mind; for that she had been speaking about it a few days before: but upon my exhorting her not to be concerned about her perishable body, and telling her that all due care would be taken of it, she made *such* signs with her head and hands, and *such* a sound in her throat, as left no room to any present to doubt her meaning—that it was not about her earthly tabernacle she wished to speak, but about her immortal soul. Pained

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at finding all her efforts to articulate ineffectual, she threw herself back with an appearance of disquietude and grief. I observed to her that we partly understood her meaning; and that although she could not express to me what was in her mind, yet our gracious SAVIOUR could read it; and directed her to pour out her heart before HIM. At this she indicated the liveliest satisfaction. I spoke much to her of the utter inability of men or any *creatures* to teach—to help—or to save her; of the sufficiency of CHRIST alone; and of the greatness—the freedom—and the faithfulness of his promises. All this time she held my hand; and *pressed* it every minute, in token of feeling and assenting to what I said. At length I left her with difficulty, and evident reluctance on her part; but with a promise of returning about nine o'clock.

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At nine I called again ; and found her alive, but apparently dozing. I therefore desired the women not to disturb her ; and after speaking a few words to them upon the awful occasion, was about to go : but she soon shewed that she knew my voice ; and rousing herself, turned (as well as she was able) with a look of earnestness, that plainly said—‘ do not go.’ She again seized my hand, and evinced as much intelligence and feeling as before. While I was at prayer, her hands were clasped and her eyes lifted up, with an exertion of which I should have hardly thought her dying frame was capable. I commended her to the Lord ; and left the room, supposing that I went out unperceived : but was soon called back by the women, who said she was able to articulate \*—‘ is

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\* This I scarcely believe ; but suppose they found it easy to interpret the sound she made, from the expressiveness of the signs and manner that accompanied it.

he gone ?' She shewed evident joy at my return—caught my hand again—and by the pressure of it seemed to upbraid me for having left her. I encouraged her with our Lord's declarations that HE will “ *never* leave nor forsake” his people.

She at times appeared in much bodily pain. I asked her whether her *mind* was at *ease* and *happy* ?—I asked her again whether it was *uneasy* and *unhappy* ? I repeated both questions ; but she would not make *any sign* in reply to either enquiry. I told her the way to get ease and comfort in her mind was to *believe* our SAVIOUR'S *promises*, and trust and look to him for their accomplishment. I mentioned some of them ; and asked her whether she was casting herself on his mercy, his faithfulness and power ? This was a question to which she *could* reply :

reply :—she seemed to meet it with joy, and eagerly made signs in the affirmative—peculiarly expressive after her having declined the former enquiries. I now perceived that her soul having *fled for refuge* was “ looking to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world ; ”—but with such a *trembling* hope as would not allow her to signify she was *at ease*. Nor can they wonder at this who consider the situation of a poor *convinced* sinner, just passing into the *eternal* world, and but newly awakened to a sense of its importance.—It was an awful scene ; and even the poor wretches who were in the ward felt it for the time to be so. They were crowded round the bed of their *dying fellow-sinner* ; and anxiously watched all her looks and motions, which were so significant that they generally anticipated me in interpreting them.—I mentioned one  
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declaration of our Lord's—(I think it was that he “came to *seek* and to *save* that which was *lost*”)—and added—‘is not that comfortable?’ She leaned forward to nod her head, with a look and in a manner the most declarative of a joyful *receiving* of the word and *recumbency* upon it. I then repeated the promise that those who are brought to Jesus “shall never perish ;—that He *gives* to them *eternal* life ; and that none shall pluck them out of *his* hands:”—adding as before—‘is not this comfortable?’ She repeated the sigh with such speechless *energy*, that the women kneeling round her bed could not suppress an *exclamation* of surprise and joy.

I was for some time silent, while she continued in evident exercise of soul ;—all her intellectual powers vigorous, and all awakened to a sense  
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of her situation.—She drew my hand closer to her—squeezed it—and at length lifted it up to clasp it between *both* of hers with an emotion and affection that I believe I never shall forget. The dearest friend I have has never manifested such *tenderness of gratitude*, as seemed at that moment to fill her heart almost to bursting. Poor soul! it was a sensation to which she had been before a stranger: but similar (I doubt not) to hers who once “washed our Saviour’s feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet—*loving much* because *much* had been *forgiven* her.” (Luke vii. 36—48.)—After some time pain obliged her to let me go. I reminded her of the *Saviour’s* sufferings; and the nearness of the time when “He himself shall wipe away tears from off all faces.”—She resumed my hand with a *feeble* hold,

hold, for the powers of nature were almost exhausted. She appeared to drop asleep, and I took that opportunity to disengage my hand gradually from hers; but she perceived what I was about, and with a renewed exertion grasped it as if to say—‘you shall not go.’—Whenever I insisted upon the particular terms of any promise which proved it to be given to *sinners* and open to the *vilest*, the manner in which she intimated that she *felt* its force was more striking than almost any words can describe. Indeed I find myself so inadequate to convey a conception of it to those who were not *witnesses* of the scene, that I have been almost discouraged from making the attempt.—At length whether she fell into a doze, or was too much enfeebled to retain her hold of my hand, I found means to slip

slip away ; promising to call again next morning.

When I came at 10 o'clock, I learned that her soul had taken it's flight about an hour before. I doubt not but I shall meet this *poor prostitute* in glory—a monument (as well as myself) of *redeeming mercy* and of *redeeming power* : and that even her putrid *body* that was “ fown in *corruption*,” an awful instance of the effects of sin, shall be “ raised in *incorruption*”—rescued from the power of the grave by Him who has conquered death—and displayed among the spoils of victory that shall grace his triumph.

I know the *self-righteous* PHARISEE will murmur as of old, at finding that the Saviour whom we preach “ *receiveth sinners* ;”—that he is “ plenteous

teous in mercy" unto the *vilest* that "calls upon his name;" and mighty to "save unto the uttermost" the *most ruined* that "flies to him for refuge:"—that there are no sins of so deep a dye but *his blood* can wash them out—no iniquities so strong but they may be subdued by *his power*. To the PHARISEE *this GOSPEL* will be a stumbling-block and offence:—to him it will be no "joyful sound," for it proclaims a salvation of which he does not feel his *need*, and offers a deliverance which he does not *desire* to receive. But to the awakened sinner it is indeed "*good tidings of great joy*"—joyful as the news of *pardon* to the *condemned criminal*, or of *liberty* to the *chained captive*. And "*blessed* is the people that KNOW the joyful sound."

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I am not ignorant also that the *wise* SCRIBE—too wise to receive the truths of the kingdom of God “as a little child”—will here declaim against a *death-bed repentance*. One will shake his head, and gravely *doubt* it's efficacy. Another will prudently suggest the *danger* of declaring to the people that the sinner turn when he may to the Saviour, shall not be cast out. A third more bold will hardily maintain that a *death-bed repentance can be of no avail*. ‘What,’ he will ask, ‘can a few *tears* or *prayers* do in the hour of dissolving nature towards *atoning* for the guilt of an *ill-spent life*?’—As much, thou fool! as thy *well-spent life* can do towards *atoning* for the smallest of thy sins—that is—*nothing*. And I tell thee, sinner! who trustest in the decency of thy character and conduct—in the number and strictness of thy *duties*—for  
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acceptance ;—that thou must repent of thy very *righteousnesses*, and cast them from thee “ as filthy rags ”—and fly stript and polluted as thou art to Jesus that *He* may “ cleanse thee from all thy filthiness ” and cover thee with the robe of righteousness ;—thou must receive pardon from him as a guilty rebel—and as a *fallen* creature, “ dead in trespasses and sins,” must be raised to spiritual life by *his* quickening power :—or else, with all thy goodness and with all thy works, thou shalt be “ found naked ” at the last day, and “ publicans and *harlots* shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before *thee*.”

REPENTANCE is the turning of a heart, *broken for sin*, to GOD the SAVIOUR for deliverance from it. They are *sinners* and not the *righteous* whom he “ calls to this repentance,”  
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and upon whom he *bestows* it. For it is *his gift*, which He is “exalted to *give*.” (Acts v. 31. and 2 Tim. 2, 25.) *His spirit* it is that “*convinces of sin*”—that opens the *blind eyes*—awakens the *sleeping* conscience—subdues the *stubborn* will—and leads the sinner to “look upon him whom he has pierced and to mourn.” In dispensing this, as well as the other gifts that he has “received for the rebellious,” he is a SOVEREIGN: He “has mercy on whom He *will* have mercy;” and often in his unfathomable wisdom effectually calls the poor abandoned profligate, plucked as “a brand from the burning;” while the *demure* and *decent* sinner goes on, careless and self-deceived, and “*neglecting* this great salvation,” till he discovers its greatness too late, by *experiencing* the greatness of the *wrath* from which it proposed deliverance.

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Those who acknowledge that *repentance* is the SAVIOUR's *gift*, *freely* bestowed by his *mercy* and *effectually* wrought in the heart by his *power*, cannot deny that even a *poor prostitute* may *repent upon her dying bed*. And to suppose that *any* sinner, truly turning at *any* moment to the Lord, shall not be received, is a rash attempt to *make God a liar*:—for He has said—“ him that *cometh to me*, I will in *no wise* cast out.”—Shall we *doubt* what He has spoken? Or what GOD has revealed in his word, shall we be *too prudent* to declare?

I know that the testimony of GOD's *mercy* to sinners will be *perverted*, as much as the declarations of his *wrath* against sin are despised. But shall we be *afraid* to preach the GOSPEL because it proves to *some* “ the favour of death unto death?” Or shall we  
vainly



vainly think to make the word of GOD *more safe*, by *disguising* or *corrupting* it? God forbid! “ A *necessity* is laid upon us, and wo unto us if we preach not the GOSPEL!”—if we preach not JESUS to sinners, as the *only* SAVIOUR for any, and as a *sufficient* SAVIOUR for *all*:—if we invite not those who are *farthest off*, as well as those who are *nigh*, to come to JESUS that they may be made the children of God, receive the pardon of their sins, “ and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith in him:”—if we testify not his *willingness* to *receive all* who “ fly to him for refuge,” his *faithfulness* to *keep* them, and his *power* to *save* them *unto the uttermost*.—Those who from their hearts *believe* this report “ *shall be saved* ;” and those who *believe* it not “ *shall be damned* :”—but in both “ we are unto God a sweet favour of Christ,

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in them that are *saved* and in them that *perish*."

I must add that *to take encouragement from the mercy of GOD to continue in sin or delay repentance*, betrays no less a *perverted judgment* than a *corrupted heart*. To refuse the *gift* of GOD that is offered *now*, because it is offered *freely* as a gift or may *perhaps* be offered *afterwards*—while it is *ingratitude* that draws down the *wrath* of HEAVEN, is *folly* also that excites the *laugh* of HELL.

F I N I S.

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